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An Evaluation of Two Methods of Teaching Business Letter-Writing Skills.

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AN EVALUATION OF TWO METHODS OF TEACHING
BUSINESS LETTER-WRITING SKILLS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Interdepartmental Program of Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine what effect rewriting had on student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills in a business communication course. It involved one hundred fourteen students at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, during the fall semester of the 1981-82 academic year.

The experimental-control group, pretest-posttest design was used and each of the two experimental groups completed two positive (A-Plan) and two negative (B-Plan) letter rewriting exercises. There were no rewriting assignments in the control group. All pretest and posttest letters were graded by five business communication instructors. Experimental Group I was conducted using individual letter rewriting exercises and the lecture-discussion method; Experimental Group II was conducted using small-group letter rewriting exercises and the lecture-discussion method; the Control Group was conducted using only the lecture-discussion method.

Analysis of covariance (with the significance set at the .05 level) was used to analyze the data collected. Adjusted mean posttest scores were examined using student English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), overall Grade Point

Averages (GPA), and pretest scores as covariates. Results of the analysis of covariance on A-Plan and B-Plan letters showed significant differences among group means.

The Scheffe Procedure was used to examine differences between means. When students in Experimental Group I and Experimental Group II were compared to students in the Control Group, there were significant differences in achievement of A-Plan and B-Plan business letter-writing skills favoring the two experimental groups. There was no significant difference in student achievement between students in Experimental Group I and Experimental Group II.

The results of this study indicated that individual rewriting letter exercises and small-group rewriting letter exercises were more effective than the traditional lecture-discussion method in increasing student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Business communication instructors are continuously seeking methods of instruction that will result in improvement of student performance. Since most business communication is via letters rather than memorandums, business reports, conferences, telecommunication, and telephone conversations, business letter-writing skills are a vital part of this field (Treece, 1978). These skills have developed over a period of time and are now an accepted segment of business communication courses.

The method of teaching business communication is usually one of the following: the theory-application, the functional approach, or a combination of the two. Regardless of the method used, business letter-writing skills are incorporated into instruction.

This study focused on rewriting letter assignments as a way of increasing student achievement in business letter-writing skills. Because the most widely used form of business communication is through letter writing and a major portion of a business communication course involves business letter-writing skills (Swenson, 1980; Stine and Skarzenski, 1979), it seemed that increased proficiency of these skills would result in increased student performance in the business communication course.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to evaluate two methods of teaching business letter-writing skills in a business communication course. This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What effect will individual rewriting exercises have on student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills?

2. What effect will small-group rewriting exercises have on student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills?

3. How will the achievement of students who receive individual rewriting exercises compare with the achievement of those who receive small-group rewriting exercises?

Delimitations of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana. The sample consisted of students enrolled in three sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, during the fall semester of the 1981-82 school year.

This study did not include rewriting exercises on persuasive (C-Plan) letters or other types of written business communication such as memorandums or reports. The only structured interpersonal communication exercises used were those specified in the study.

Limitations of the Study

The students were enrolled in the sections using the normal registration procedures of the University of New Orleans, and randomization may have been limited by the use of intact classes. Findings and conclusions can only be applied to the students in the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans.

Definition of Terms

In order to clarify the terms used in this study, the following definitions were used:

A-Plan letter. A positive message letter written using a direct psychological approach.

Adaptation. Writing so the reader thinks the message is specifically for him. The writer should consider factors such as the age, sex, occupation, and educational level of the reader.

B-Plan letter. A negative message letter that is written using an indirect psychological approach.

Business letter-writing skills. The techniques and factors affecting the writing and/or psychology of communication through business letters. These skills include: grammar, English mechanics, tone, language level, clarity, conciseness, avoidance of trite expressions, openings, closings, format, style, concreteness, "you" attitude, adaptation, coherent sequence of ideas, presentation method, positiveness, and persuasiveness.

Business letters. The positive (A-Plan) and the negative (B-Plan) letters.

Clarity. Conveys the ideas so there is no reader misunderstanding.

Closing. The last sentence, paragraph, or section of a letter.

Coherent sequence of ideas. The sentence and paragraph construction is organized so that the ideas flow logically and smoothly from the beginning of the letter to the end.

Conciseness. The message contains only the necessary words and omits the superfluous.

Concreteness, or Specific Facts and Figures. Refers to the use of valid, accurate, and relevant data to convince the reader.

English Grade Point Average. The average of the student's college English grades prior to the experiment (using a 4.0 system).

English mechanics. Refers to subject-verb agreement, spelling, fragmentary sentences, punctuation, run-on sentences, nonparallel sentences, and dangling or misplaced modifiers.

Format. Includes letter parts, placement and overall appearance.

Functional approach. Teaching business communication by beginning with business letter-writing skills and then applying the skills to writing business letters.

Grade Point Average. The average of all the student's college grades prior to the experiment (using a 4.0 system).

Grammar. Includes the use of words in forming phrases, clauses, or sentences and is sometimes referred to as syntax.

Language level. The reader's level of comprehension and is often included as a part of adaptation.

Opening. The first sentence, paragraph, or section of a business letter.

Persuasiveness. Writing in a convincing, effective manner that will make the reader act or think the way the writer wants.

Positiveness. Stating the pleasant rather than the unpleasant factors, stressing what can be done rather than what cannot be done, and avoiding actual negative words and phrases.

Presentation method. Refers to either the direct or indirect psychological approach used in writing letters. The direct approach involves putting the main idea of the letter in the first paragraph. In the indirect approach, the negative information is preceded by positive wording. Deductive and inductive can be used interchangeably with direct and indirect.

Rewriting business letters. Editing, through the means of rewriting, complete business letters by applying learned ideas and concepts.

Structured interpersonal communication. The oral exchange of ideas dealing with business letter rewriting assignments within groups of more than two but less than five people.

Student achievement. The score that students receive on the posttest.

Style. Writing interestingly, clearly, and inconspicuously.

Theory-application approach. A teaching method of business communication that begins with a general presentation of theory and then applies the communication theory to business letter-writing skills.

Tone. The manner in which an idea is stated rather than the idea itself. It involves courteousness and can be personal or impersonal.

Trite expressions. Words or phrases that have been overused to the point that they have become dull and meaningless.

"You" attitude. Looking at the situation from the reader's viewpoint.

Importance of the Study

This study attempted to provide a controlled situation where individual letter rewriting exercises and small-group (structured interpersonal communication) letter rewriting letter exercises were the independent variables and student

achievement of business letter-writing skills was the dependent variable.

Results from this study may play a part in improving methods of teaching business letter-writing skills. Because letter-writing skills are an integral part of a business communication course, the results could prove valuable to teachers in the subject area.

In addition, business letter-writing skills are considered to be among the most important skills necessary for people in business and industry (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979). The results of this study might also be useful to businesses and employers who need people with efficient and effective business letter-writing skills.

Source and Treatment of Data

The sample for this study consisted of students enrolled in three sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana. Each of the three groups was taught by a different instructor.

The instruments used for evaluation of student achievement of business letter-writing skills on the A-Plan and B-Plan letters were designed by the researcher and validated by a panel of experts prior to being used. Because five graders were used, inter-rater reliability was determined before the experiment began, using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (Champion, 1970).

A pretest for both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters was administered to the sample at the beginning of the experiment. These pretests were business letters that students wrote in response to a likely business situation.

In Experimental Group I, students were taught business letter-writing skills using individual letter rewriting exercises and the lecture-discussion method. In Experimental Group II, students were taught business letter-writing skills using small-group letter rewriting exercises (structured interpersonal communication) and the lecture-discussion method. The Control Group was taught using only the lecture-discussion method. At the end of the experiment, a posttest was given to the students in the two experimental groups and the control group. Scores on the pretest and the posttest for both A- and B-Plan letters, student English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), and Grade Point Averages (GPA) were analyzed by using the analysis of covariance.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although forms of communication have existed since the beginning of time, the area of business communication is a fairly new subject area. One of the main concerns in this field is the development of effective business letter-writing skills (Warner, 1979); and even if instructional methods vary, these skills are incorporated into business communication courses. Even though business letter-writing skills are a basic part of business, relatively little research was found that involved increasing student knowledge or achievement of these skills. Most of the research dealt with exercises on writing sentences, phrases, and paragraphs as one of the control variables.

Development of Skills

Throughout the years, basic business letter-writing skills have developed in the business communication field. In developing a program to upgrade basic writing skills of business communication students at San Diego State University, Vik (1979) identified several basic skills. Some of the very elementary writing skills that Vik listed included the sentence, punctuation within the sentence, spelling, and subject-verb agreement. In addition to these

grammar skills and English mechanics, business communicators have developed skills specifically related to business letter writing. For example, positiveness, "you" viewpoint, and persuasion were cited by Boyd in 1963 as psychological aspects of effective business letter writing. In 1965, Williams stressed style and adaptation as important aspects of teaching business writing.

A study was conducted in 1969 by Cole to get specific information from industry that could serve as a guide to business educators regarding the business writing knowledge and skills that undergraduate students should acquire in their pre-employment written communication training. The responses from company managers and clerical personnel included in the survey showed that conciseness, correctness in grammar and spelling, and the principles of the communication process were important aspects of written communication instruction.

By the 1970's some common business letter-writing skills had become recognized. Sobolik (1970), who analyzed American Collegiate Business Communication texts, found unity, clearness, correctness, completeness, conciseness, concreteness, coherence, emphasis, consideration, courtesy, character, personalization, tone, and "you" attitude included in the skills needed for effective business letter writing.

A study of the effect of remedial instruction in English usage on the achievement of college students in a

business letter-writing course, completed by Pickard in 1975, was based on several business letter-writing skills. According to Pickard, tone, word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, purpose, completeness, and organization were necessary elements of letter-writing skill.

Bruckner (1974) conducted a study to develop an instrument to assess business writing achievement of students entering the Master of Accountancy and Master of Business Administration Programs at the University of South Carolina. By consulting six business writing texts and consulting with eight businessmen chosen for their skill in business writing, Bruckner found nine major criteria necessary for inclusion on her assessment instrument. She found that tone, language level, clarity, conciseness, mechanics, avoidance of trite phrases, spelling, openings, and closings were considered important factors in assessing business writing achievement.

After conducting a survey of the most widely used business communication textbooks, Stokes and Hatch (1975) noted that adaptation, positiveness, and empathy were primary factors of good business writing.

In identifying the general orientation of a typical business communication course, Glassman and Farley (1979) found that instructors often neglected grading grammar, spelling, and punctuation when evaluating business writing. These elements, according to Glassman and Farley, should not

be overlooked as secondary to the "facts" in written communication.

Additional studies pointed out components of business letter-writing skills. Wilkinson (1977) stated that "good business letters are a combination of good writing, good business, and good attitudes and psychology." According to Wilkinson, skills involved in writing good business letters included adaptation, grammar, "you" attitude, clarity, conciseness, coherence, active voice, desirable tone, positiveness, sequence of ideas, courteousness, sincerity, and style.

Several essential skills were also listed by Allred and Clark (1978) when they conducted a study to find existing major problem areas and needed teaching priority areas in written communication. A survey of people in business was conducted to determine written communication problems of recent college graduates and opinions about course content. Allred and Clark also surveyed teachers of written communication regarding problem areas for students. Results of the study showed that graduates and teachers considered conciseness, clarity, purpose, spelling, sentence construction, organization, and paragraph construction as business writing skills with which they had the most difficulty. Both graduates and teachers believed that these skills needed to be given priority in teaching written business communication.

Stine and Skarzenski (1979) also conducted a survey of business and academe to determine priorities for the business communication classroom. They surveyed Iowa State University faculty members and Iowa manufacturing, insurance, construction, finance, retail, food processing, utilities, education, research, and service industries to learn what communication skills and practices were most important in the world outside the classroom. Results of the survey showed that clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar, and spelling were considered the most important basic skills.

Lutz (1979) extended the list of writing skills and included correct word choice, avoidance of unnecessary repetition and redundancies, limitation of wordy phrases, use of specific facts and figures, use of "you" attitude, coherent sequence of ideas, elimination of irritating expressions, and writing from the reader's viewpoint. Lutz called these elements "basic skills in the future office," and stressed that they should not be overlooked as the use of automated equipment increased.

In an effort to determine what should be taught to students in business writing, Halpern (1981) conducted an informal survey of one hundred twenty-five writers in business, industry, and government. He asked the writers to indicate the most useful things they learned in their on-the-job training in writing. Tone, adaptation to audience, organization of material, and clarification of

purpose were among the skills that writers considered the most useful.

Additional emphasis was placed on specific writing skills needed in business by Hulbert (1981). Business executives who were asked what college courses should teach their future employees stated that heavy emphasis should be placed on logic, audience analysis, organization, clarity, conciseness, tact, sincerity, and courtesy.

Teachers of business communication recognize the importance of letter-writing skills, and they agree on a common objective--directing efforts toward student understanding of these skills (Bullard, 1971). By researching methods in which students can achieve a better understanding of these skills, teachers can be made aware of procedures that may help increase student achievement.

Rewriting or Editing Letters

The review of literature revealed few studies that related specifically to rewriting or editing exercises for improving letter-writing skills. Hulbert (1980) stressed the fact that the first draft of a written communication is rarely the best effort. He stated that effective writing required much revision until it is satisfactorily polished. According to Hulbert, writing skills are only improved through practice.

A study to determine what would be most useful for business communication students to learn was conducted by

Hemphill (1975), and one of the basic writing principles he identified for business communication was writing clear and complete messages. In order to achieve clear and complete messages, Hemphill concluded that one must write and review written material thoroughly to get rid of excess words as well as errors.

Haga (1977) stated that a "good writer is usually a good editor." A writer must be able to edit both the letters he receives and those he writes. Haga pointed out that being able to edit the letters received would aid the receiver in interpreting them and in making proper responses much faster. On the other hand, being able to edit would help the writer "take out the garbage" and write a more effective letter.

Morris (1980) also emphasized the importance of editing in his book, Make Yourself Clear. According to Morris, "skillful writers are above all skillful editors." Communication expressing brilliant ideas will not be brilliant unless it is subjected to vigorous editing.

In addition, DiBattista (1979) conducted a study using three different methods of instruction on student comprehension and application of the communication process to determine the extent the methodology affected student achievement. He found that students who received instruction that included additional writing exercises appeared to attain greater comprehension achievement than students who received a listening program.

A study to determine whether the letter-evaluation method was as effective as the letter-writing method when used as a learning device in a college-level business correspondence class was conducted by Baker (1974). He found that students taught by the letter-evaluation method were less successful on letter-writing examinations than students taught by the letter-writing method.

In an effort to determine the frequency of writing upon student achievement, Inman (1970) used four groups in his experiment, each with a different number of assignments to be completed. The results showed that there was no significant difference in achievement of the groups of students who completed twenty-four, fifteen, ten, or six writing problems on the written letter test.

Interpersonal Communication

Another means of increasing student knowledge of writing skills may be through use of interpersonal communication. One objective of business communication should be for students to participate in group problem-solving experiences using oral and written cases (Voyles, 1978). These experiences require more student participation and preparation because students must be able to listen attentively, discuss the problem, and make contributions to the solution. Similarly, Baker (1978) suggested that small-group work encouraged active student involvement. In small-group work, stated Baker, "students

are encouraged to solve a particular problem while working together as a team."

According to Kramer (1979), an activity that is used by business communication teachers is that of "bad example" exercises requiring students to examine and rewrite or discuss a letter that is poorly organized, wordy, imprecise, or poorly constructed. This type of activity could reinforce the students' writing skills as well as improve their impromptu speaking and analyzing skills. Also, the use of group-writing assignments in business communication classes has shown that students are exposed to the exchange of words, ideas, and expressions through interpersonal communication (Knapper, 1963).

Hemphill (1975) suggested that interpersonal communication was a means of getting students to communicate with one another, and listed some teaching methods that have proven "worth trying." One of these methods was in-class writing of letters by committees.

Swenson (1980) indicated that interpersonal communication and small-group communication should be increased and that more emphasis should be placed on small-group discussions in a business communication course. This study of thirty-five executives of California-based corporations showed that the executives considered interpersonal communication skills extremely important because they are skills that are frequently used in management.

In addition, Holder (1979) suggested that interpersonal communication exercises, in the form of small-group writing assignments, are an effective way for improving student achievement. Group assignments would permit the less skillful writers to learn from those who write better and help the stronger writers strengthen their skills by explaining their successful techniques to weaker writers.

Another study, by Wohlgamuth, Cone, and House (1981) was conducted to determine what effect structured interpersonal communication had on the business-writing skills of students in business communication classes. The results showed that the experimental classes (conducted by use of small-group or structured interpersonal communication exercises) produced a significantly higher student achievement of business-writing skills than that of the control classes.

Implications of the Literature

The literature showed the importance of business letter-writing skills and suggested that editing by rewriting may improve these skills. Most of the research dealt with rewriting phrases, sentences, and paragraphs and not complete business letters. However, since improvement was noted in these types of rewriting exercises, it seems reasonable to expect that students who are given rewriting exercises consisting of complete letters will develop better business letter-writing skills.

The literature also suggested that group activity increases interpersonal communication, and interpersonal communication may result in increased student achievement. It may be, then, that the use of small-group activities will also result in increased student achievement of business letter-writing skills.

Chapter III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The experimental-control group, pretest-posttest design was used for this study. Experimental Group I, taught by using individual letter rewriting exercises, consisted of forty-two students enrolled in Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, at the University of New Orleans. Experimental Group II, taught by using small-group letter rewriting exercises (structured interpersonal communication) consisted of thirty-seven students enrolled in Office Administration 2651. The control section consisted of thirty-five students enrolled in Business Communication and was taught using the lecture-discussion method.

Achievement in business letter-writing skills was measured using checklists designed by the researcher. Separate checklists were used for the A-Plan and B-Plan letter evaluations. (See Appendices F and G.)

Selection of the Sample

Three intact classes were used for the sample, and the treatment was randomly assigned to the classes. The total enrollment for the three classes was one hundred forty-two; however, the study included only the one hundred fourteen students who completed a pretest and posttest for both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters.

Description of the Treatment

This research was conducted at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, during the 1981-82 academic year. Three teachers in the Department of Office Administration taught the control and experimental sections. All three sections involved in the study met on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (three hours per week) during the six weeks of the experiment. Five instructors, including the three teachers mentioned previously, participated as graders for the pretests and posttests. Letter rewriting assignments on an individual basis and letter rewriting assignments on a small-group (structured interpersonal communication) basis were the variables investigated.

Before the experiment, the researcher gave the teachers the procedures to be followed when working with the individual rewriting assignments and the small-group or structured interpersonal communication exercises. The researcher explained the checklists for evaluating the pretests and posttests to clarify or answer any questions about the procedures the teachers were to follow. Except for the individual and small-group rewriting assignments, the experimental sections and control section were taught using the same lecture-discussion methods and procedures.

At the first class meeting, each student was required to write a positive (A-Plan) letter, and at the second class meeting each student was required to write a negative (B-Plan) letter. (See Appendices H and K.) These two

letters were graded by five business communication instructors using the evaluation instruments that had been validated by a panel of experts. The mean pretest score for each student was determined for both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters.

Rewriting assignments in the experimental groups consisted of asking students to rewrite two positive letters and two negative letters. These letters were sample business letters written by the researcher and applied to situations selected by the researcher. (See Appendices I and L.)

Experimental Group I

In Experimental Group I, immediately after introducing the A-Plan or B-Plan letter topic, students received a copy of a business letter that they were to edit by rewriting. The instructor told the students to read the letter and use their knowledge of business letter-writing skills to rewrite the letter. In addition, students were told that the assignment would not be "graded" and that credit for completing each assignment would be recorded as a part of the students' class participation points. The students had 35 minutes to rewrite the letter. They were allowed to keep the original copy of the assignment for reference in the following discussion.

At the beginning of the next class session, the instructor used the first 15 minutes of class to discuss the rewriting assignment by pointing out aspects that needed

changing and answering questions the students had about the letter. During the remainder of this class session, the teacher continued the lecture-discussion coverage of the respective letter plan, which included letter parts, format, and skills involved in writing the letters.

At the next class meeting (third meeting on the respective letter plan), the instructor assigned the second letter to be rewritten. Just as with the first letter, the students were allowed 35 minutes to complete the rewriting assignment, and they were allowed to keep the original copy of the assignment for the following discussion.

The first 15 minutes of the next session were used for answering questions students had relating to the letter, discussing the assignment, and pointing out aspects that needed changing.

Experimental Group II

In Experimental Group II, immediately after introducing the topic, the instructor divided the students into groups of three or four. Each group was given a copy of the same business letter that the students in Experimental Group I received. The instructor directed the students to exchange ideas using their knowledge of business letter-writing skills and to rewrite the letter as a group effort. By using structured interpersonal communication, each group wrote a composite letter. Students were also told that their letters would not be "graded" and that they would receive class participation credit for completing the

assignment. Students were given 35 minutes to complete the rewriting, and the instructor collected the papers at the end of the period. Students were allowed to keep the original copy of the assignment for reference in the discussion period.

At the beginning of the next class session, the instructor used the first 15 minutes to discuss the assignment. The remainder of the class period was used for coverage of the material according to the course syllabus.

At the next class meeting (third meeting on the letter plan), the instructor assigned the second rewriting assignment. The students again divided into the same groups and wrote a composite letter and were allowed 35 minutes to complete the rewriting assignment.

During the first 15 minutes of the next class meeting, the instructor discussed the assignment with the students, answered questions, and pointed out changes that were needed. The instructors in the experimental groups used the same procedures for both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters, and a total of four letter rewriting assignments were completed by each experimental group.

Control Group

In the Control Group, there were no rewriting letter assignments. The individual rewriting and structured interpersonal communication rewriting exercises were the only difference in the methods and procedures of presenting the material in the three sections. Students in the Control

Group received the same letters as the experimental groups, but they were not required to rewrite the letters. These students were told to read the letters and to be ready to discuss the needed changes during the following class period. The teacher of the Control Group also used the first 15 minutes of each session to present and discuss factors that needed to be improved in the sample letters.

Approximately three weeks after the first presentation of each letter plan, students in the experimental sections and the control section were given a posttest. These posttests were also letters that the students were required to write in class. (See Appendices J and M.) Each student had a copy of the checklist to refer to while writing the posttest letters. Both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters were graded by the five instructors mentioned previously, using the same evaluation instrument employed for the pretest scores. The posttest scores were determined using the same procedure followed in computing the pretest scores.

Preparation and Validation of the Instrument

According to Breland and Gaynor (1979), direct assessment, which requires an actual written assessment, is a successful means of evaluating writing skills. Diederich (1946), Eley (1955), and Gronlund (1977) agreed that direct assessment is a valid measurement for writing skills because it requires the candidate to perform the actual behavior which is being measured.

In order to prepare the evaluation instruments to be used in this study, the researcher consulted with teachers of business communication, used communication textbooks and studies, and relied on checklists that were being used in the Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, course at the University of New Orleans.

Using these guides, the researcher constructed a 25-item instrument (called a checklist) for both the A-Plan and B-Plan letters. Items on the checklists were selected to evaluate students' knowledge, understanding, and ability to demonstrate business letter-writing skills. The maximum point value on each checklist was fifty, and for each violation on the checklist, one point was deducted from the possible fifty points.

These checklists, which were used for the posttests, were also designed to be used by the instructors as evaluation instruments and by the students as a means of personal feedback. In order to help the evaluator and the student in using these checklists, the researcher presented the items in sentence form. These sentences were designed to be used by students as individual explanations and critiques of their letters. The sentences enabled the evaluators to save time in marking the students' violations of the business letter-writing skills. Instead of writing extensive comments, evaluators could simply write the alphabetical letter that corresponded with the sentence that described the violation. In addition, the lists of possible

violations on both checklists were divided into the sections of a business letter: opening, coverage, and close. In order to provide posttest feedback and evaluation on tone, style, format, English mechanics, and grammar, a section was included for indicating whether these skills were acceptable or unacceptable.

A panel of five experts in the field of business communication (shown in Appendix C) was selected for validation of the two evaluation instruments. Each expert verified that the checklists were a valid measure for evaluating student performance on business letter-writing skills by completing a response form (shown in Appendix E) and returning it to the researcher.

Inter-Rater Reliability

Once the checklists were validated, the inter-rater reliability was determined by using Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance. The coefficient of concordance is used to measure the extent to which there is agreement between rankings on any number of variables.

In this study, the materials ranked were five A-Plan letters and five B-Plan letters that were randomly selected from those written in Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, course during the summer semester of 1981 at the University of New Orleans. Each of the five graders was asked to rank the A-Plan letters according to their effective coverage and use of business letter-writing

skills, as listed on the A-Plan checklist. The graders numbered the A-Plan letters, in order, from one to five, using number one for the best and number five for the worst. The same process was used for ranking the five B-Plan letters.

Determination of the agreement between the ranked sets of scores (called W) was based on the variance between the total scores that would be expected when absolutely no agreement existed between variables and the total scores that were observed. The results of the rankings are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Using the figures presented in Table 1, the coefficient of concordance (degree of agreement among graders) for the A-Plan letters was found to be .71. A Chi Square test was used to test the significance of the agreement. The computed Chi Square value (14.24) was significant at the .01 level.

In determining the coefficient of concordance for the B-Plan letters, figures shown in Table 2 were used. The number of variables (k) was five, and the number of letters (N) was five. The significance of W (.78) was tested using Chi Square, and the value (15.52) was significant at the .01 level.

Statistical Procedures

Analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data collected. Adjusted mean posttest scores were examined

Table 1
Graders' Scores for A-Plan Letters

Letter	A	B	Graders C	D	E	Observed Rank Sum	Expected Rank Sum
1	3	4	4	3	4	18	5
2	1	1	2	1	3	8	10
3	4	3	1	4	1	13	15
4	2	2	3	2	2	11	20
5	5	5	5	5	5	25	25
Sum	15	15	15	15	15	75	75

$$W = \frac{S}{(1/12)k^2(N^3 - N)}$$

$W = .71$ (coefficient of concordance or the degree of agreement between ranked sets of scores).

$S = 178$ (the sum of the squares of the observed deviations from the expected sum of ranks).

$k = 5$ (the number of variables or graders).

$N = 5$ (the number of letters in the sample being ranked).

using student English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), overall Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores as covariates. The dependent variables in this study were posttest scores, and the independent variables were individual and small-group (structured interpersonal communication) letter rewriting exercises.

Table 2
Graders' Scores for B-Plan Letters

Letter	A	B	Graders C	D	E	Observed Rank Sum	Expected Rank Sum
1	5	5	5	5	5	25	5
2	1	1	2	2	4	10	10
3	4	4	4	4	3	19	15
4	3	3	3	3	1	13	20
5	2	2	1	1	2	8	25
Sum	15	15	15	15	15	75	75

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyze the data collected from the two administrations of the positive (A-Plan) and negative (B-Plan) letter evaluation instruments (checklists) for measuring business letter-writing skills. These checklists were used in all three classes during the first and second class meetings for determining student pretest scores on A- and B-Plan letters. When the individual letter rewriting exercises (conducted in Experimental Group I) and the small-group, or structured interpersonal communication, exercises (conducted in Experimental Group II) were completed, all three classes were given a posttest on the letter plans. These posttest letters, written by the students, were also evaluated by using the A-Plan and B-Plan letter checklists.

Each pretest and posttest letter was scored by five instructors, and a mean score for each student was determined for both the A- and B-Plan letters. Students who completed both pretests and both posttests were the only ones included in this study. The covariates used in the analysis included students' English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores.

In Table 3, the students' English Grade Point Averages (EGPA) are presented in frequency distribution form. The

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Student English
Grade Point Averages (EGPA)

EGPA Intervals	Control Group Frequency	Experimental Group I Frequency	Experimental Group II Frequency
3.71 - 4.00	1	1	0
3.41 - 3.70	2	3	3
3.11 - 3.40	0	0	0
2.81 - 3.10	5	10	5
2.51 - 2.80	0	0	0
2.21 - 2.50	12	11	16
1.91 - 2.20	10	15	11
1.61 - 1.90	0	0	0
1.31 - 1.60	4	2	2
1.01 - 1.30	0	0	0
.71 - 1.00	1	0	0
	N = 35	42	37
	\bar{X} = 2.37	2.50	2.45
	σ = .634	.574	.497

mean English Grade Point Average for the Control Group was 2.37; for Experimental Group I, the mean English Grade Point Average was 2.50. The mean English Grade Point Average for Experimental Group II was found to be 2.45.

A frequency distribution of Student Grade Point Averages (GPA) is also presented in tabular form. (See Table 4.) For the Control Group, the mean Grade Point Average was 2.59. Experimental Group I had a mean Grade Point Average of 2.66, and Experimental Group II had a mean Grade Point Average of 2.61.

The pretest and posttest scores were tabulated and appear in Tables 5 and 6. As shown in Table 5, the mean A-Plan pretest score for the Control Group was 31.74; the mean pretest score for Experimental Group I was 30.76; and the mean pretest score for Experimental Group II was 31.87. The mean A-Plan posttest score for the Control Group, also shown in Table 5, was 36.86. In Experimental Group I, which involved the individual letter rewriting exercises, the mean A-Plan posttest score was 38.71. A mean posttest score of 38.60 was determined for Experimental Group II A-Plan letters.

The results of the B-Plan letter pretest and posttest scores are shown in Table 6. In the Control Group, the mean B-Plan pretest score was 26.80. For Experimental Group I, the mean pretest score was 23.07, and for Experimental Group II, the mean pretest score was 22.65. The mean B-Plan posttest score for the control group was 32.51. For

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Student
Grade Point Averages (GPA)

GPA Intervals	Control Group Frequency	Experimental Group I Frequency	Experimental Group II Frequency
3.76 - 4.00	1	1	1
3.51 - 3.75	1	3	1
3.26 - 3.50	3	4	3
3.01 - 3.25	1	3	5
2.76 - 3.00	5	8	3
2.51 - 2.75	7	4	5
2.26 - 2.50	5	9	7
2.01 - 2.25	9	6	8
1.76 - 2.00	3	3	3
1.51 - 1.75	0	1	1
	N = 35	42	37
	\bar{X} = 2.59	2.66	2.61
	σ = .516	.572	.559

Table 5
Frequency Distribution of Business Letter-
Writing Skills Test Scores on
Positive (A-Plan) Letters

Score Intervals	Control Group Frequency		Experimental Group I Frequency		Experimental Group II Frequency	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
47 - 49	0	0	0	1	0	0
44 - 46	0	0	0	3	0	3
41 - 43	0	6	0	10	1	8
38 - 40	3	12	0	14	3	15
35 - 37	3	7	4	10	5	4
32 - 34	11	7	15	2	11	6
29 - 31	12	2	14	2	6	1
26 - 28	6	1	6	0	10	0
23 - 25	0	0	2	0	1	0
20 - 22	0	0	1	0	0	0
	N = 35	35	42	42	37	37
	\bar{X} = 31.74	36.86	30.76	38.71	31.87	38.60
	σ = 3.41	3.97	3.33	3.74	4.15	3.83

Table 6
Frequency Distribution of Business Letter-
Writing Skills Test Scores on
Negative (B-Plan) Letters

Score Intervals	Control Group Frequency		Experimental Group I Frequency		Experimental Group II Frequency	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
42 - 45	0	1	0	1	0	4
38 - 41	2	7	0	13	0	10
34 - 37	1	8	1	17	2	11
30 - 33	6	9	3	7	2	8
26 - 29	11	4	7	4	7	4
22 - 25	9	4	17	0	12	0
18 - 21	6	2	11	0	5	0
14 - 17	0	0	2	0	7	0
10 - 13	0	0	0	0	2	0
6 - 9	0	0	1	0	0	0
	N = 35	35	42	42	37	37
	\bar{X} = 26.80	32.51	23.07	35.62	22.65	35.70
	σ = 4.97	6.46	4.89	3.74	5.82	4.88

Experimental Group I, the mean posttest score was 35.62, and for Experimental Group II, the mean posttest score was 35.70.

Because the groups could not be initially equated regarding knowledge of business letter-writing skills, analysis of covariance was used to examine the difference between group means. The results of these analyses appear in Tables 7, 8, and 9. Each of the following three questions was examined to determine if there were significant differences between group means at the .05 level of confidence:

1. What effect will individual rewriting exercises (Experimental Group I) have on student achievement of positive message (A-Plan) and negative (B-Plan) letter-writing skills?

2. What effect will small-group writing exercises (Experimental Group II) have on student achievement of positive message (A-Plan) and negative (B-Plan) letter-writing skills?

3. How will the achievement of students who receive individual rewriting exercises compare with the achievement of those who receive small-group rewriting exercises?

Analysis of covariance using English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores as covariates of student posttest scores on A-Plan business letter-writing skills was performed for the two Experimental Groups and the Control Group. The results of

this analysis (Table 7) showed that there was a significant difference among group means.

Table 7

Results of Analysis of Covariance of Business Letter-Writing Skills on A-Plan Posttest Scores in Experimental Group I, Experimental Group II, and the Control Group

Source	df	Adjusted Sums of Squares	F Value	Probability > F
Group	2	83.13	4.23	.02
Pretest	1	248.65	25.32	.00
EGPA	1	30.34	3.09	.08
GPA	1	52.19	5.32	.02
Error	108	1060.50		
Total	113	1474.81		

Analysis of covariance using English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores as covariates of student posttest scores on B-Plan business letter-writing skills was performed for the two Experimental Groups and the Control Group. (See Table 8.) These results also showed a significant difference among group means.

Using the adjusted means of posttest scores (shown in Table 9), the Scheffe Procedure was used to examine differences between means. When the adjusted means of the A-Plan posttest scores of Experimental Group I (individual

Table 8

Results of Analysis of Covariance of Business Letter-Writing Skills on B-Plan Posttest Scores in Experimental Group I, Experimental Group II, and the Control Group

Source	df	Adjusted Sums of Squares	F Value	Probability > F
Group	2	508.04	13.92	.00
Pretest	1	646.32	35.43	.00
EGPA	1	16.22	.89	.35
GPA	1	21.59	1.18	.28
Error	108	1970.34		
Total	113	3162.51		

Table 9

Adjusted Posttest Mean Scores for Experimental Group I, Experimental Group II, and the Control Group

Group	Number	A-Plan Letter Adjusted Means	B-Plan Letter Adjusted Means
Experimental I	42	38.88a	36.02b
Experimental II	37	38.42a	36.39b
Control	35	36.84	31.31

a,b (Means with same letter are equal.)

rewriting exercises) and the Control Group were compared, the F-ratio was 8. This F-ratio of 8 was significant at the .05 level of confidence. When the adjusted means of the B-Plan posttest scores of Experimental Group I (individual

rewriting exercises) and the Control Group were compared, the F-ratio was 22.87, which was significant at the .05 level of confidence. There was a significant difference, therefore, in achievement of A-Plan and B-Plan business letter-writing skills favoring students who received individual rewriting exercises (Experimental Group I).

The adjusted means of the A-Plan posttest scores of Experimental Group II (small-group rewriting exercises) and the Control Group were also compared. For the A-Plan comparison, the F-ratio was 4.55. This F-ratio of 4.55 was significant at the .05 level of confidence. When the adjusted means of the B-Plan posttest scores of Experimental Group II (small-group rewriting exercises) and the Control Group were compared, the F-ratio was 25.30. This F-ratio of 25.30 was significant at the .05 level of confidence. In this instance, there was a significant difference in achievement of A-Plan and B-Plan business letter-writing skills favoring students who received small-group rewriting exercises (Experimental Group II).

In addition, the adjusted means of the A-Plan and B-Plan posttest scores of Experimental Group I (individual rewriting exercises) and Experimental Group II (small-group rewriting exercises) were compared. When the adjusted means of the A-Plan posttest scores were compared, the F-ratio was .42. This F-ratio of .42 was not significant at the .05 level of confidence. When the adjusted means of the B-Plan posttest scores were compared, the F-ratio was .15. This

F-ratio of .15 was not significant at the .05 level of confidence. There was not a significant difference, therefore, in achievement of A-Plan and B-Plan business letter-writing skills between students who received individual rewriting exercises (Experimental Group I) and students who received small-group rewriting exercises (Experimental Group II).

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, the conclusions that were reached, the implications that may be drawn, and the recommendations that may be made from the findings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect that rewriting business letters had on student achievement of business letter-writing skills on positive (A-Plan) and negative (B-Plan) letters in a business communication course.

The experimental design used for this study was the experimental-control group, pretest-posttest design. One control group and two experimental groups were used. Experimental Group I was taught using the lecture-discussion method and individual letter rewriting exercises, and Experimental Group II was taught using the lecture-discussion method with small-group (structured interpersonal communication) letter rewriting exercises. The Control Group, on the other hand, was taught using only the lecture-discussion method.

Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How did individual rewriting exercises affect student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills?

2. How did small-group rewriting exercises affect student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills?

3. How did the achievement of students who receive individual rewriting exercises compare with the achievement of those who receive small-group rewriting exercises?

The subjects used in this study were one hundred fourteen students enrolled in three sections of Office Administration 2651, Business Communication, at the University of New Orleans during the fall semester of 1981.

For evaluation of the business letter-writing skills, a 25-item instrument for the A-Plan letter and a 25-item instrument for the B-Plan letter were developed by the researcher. These instruments (called checklists) were used for evaluating both pretests and posttests. These checklists were validated by a panel of five experts prior to the experiment. Because five graders were used in determining pretest and posttest scores for the two letter plans, inter-rater reliability was determined before the experiment. This reliability was found to be .71, as determined by use of Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance, for the A-Plan letters. For the B-Plan letters, the degree of agreement was found to be .78. Both were significant at the .01 level of confidence.

Analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data collected. Adjusted mean posttest scores were examined using student English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), overall Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores as covariates. The dependent variables in this study were posttest scores, and the independent variables were individual and small-group (structured interpersonal communication) letter rewriting exercises.

Conclusions

The findings of this study indicated that rewriting letter exercises increased student achievement of positive message and negative message business letter-writing skills. When the achievement of students who received individual letter rewriting exercises (Experimental Group I) was compared to the achievement of students who received no letter rewriting exercises (Control Group), the Scheffe Procedure showed that there was a significant difference at the .05 level of confidence favoring students in Experimental Group I. This result indicated that the difference in achievement could not be explained by the initial differences in English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores. Therefore, one may conclude that individual letter rewriting exercises were more effective than the traditional lecture-discussion method in increasing student achievement of positive message

(A-Plan) and negative message (B-Plan) business letter-writing skills.

When the achievement of students who received small-group letter rewriting exercises (Experimental Group II) was compared to the achievement of students who received no letter rewriting exercises (Control Group), the Scheffe Procedure showed that there was a significant difference at the .05 level of confidence favoring the students in Experimental Group II. The result indicated that the difference in achievement could not be explained by the initial differences in English Grade Point Averages (EGPA), Grade Point Averages (GPA), and pretest scores. Therefore, one may conclude that small-group letter rewriting exercises were more effective than the traditional lecture-discussion method in increasing student achievement of positive message (A-Plan) and negative message (B-Plan) business letter-writing skills.

When the achievement of students who received individual letter rewriting exercises (Experimental Group I) was compared to the achievement of students who received small-group letter rewriting exercises (Experimental Group II), the Scheffe Procedure showed that there was no significant difference at the .05 level of confidence. This result indicated that the two experimental treatments were equally effective in increasing student achievement of positive message (A-Plan) and negative message (B-Plan) business letter-writing skills.

The results of this study showed that rewriting letter exercises was an effective means of increasing student achievement of business letter-writing skills on A-Plan and B-Plan letters. The findings supported Hulbert's (1980) view that writing skills are only improved through practice. These findings also agreed with those of Hemphill (1975) who stated that one must write and review written material thoroughly to achieve clear and complete messages. In addition, the results of this research agreed with those of Haga (1977) and Morris (1980) who emphasized the importance of editing in the development of skillful writing. Baker's (1974) research, showing that students taught by the letter-writing method were more successful on letter-writing examinations than those taught by the letter-evaluation method, was also supported by findings in this study.

The findings of this study also supported the theory that small-group (structured interpersonal communication) activity is one way to increase student knowledge of business letter-writing skills. The findings were in agreement with Voyles (1978), Baker (1978), and Kramer (1979), who stated that structured interpersonal communication or small-group activities increased student involvement, participation, and achievement. Also, the results of this study supported those of Hemphill (1975) and Swenson (1980), who indicated that interpersonal communication or small-group communication could increase student achievement. Holder (1979) suggested that

interpersonal communication exercises in the form of small-group writing assignments were an effective way for improving student achievement, and the results of this research also support his suggestion. Another study, showing that small-group or structured interpersonal communication exercises produced a significantly higher achievement of business-writing skills than that of the control class (Wohlgamuth, Cone, and House, 1981), was also supported by the findings of this research.

Implications

There are several implications for business communication instructors in the findings of this study:

1. Individual letter rewriting exercises can provide business communication instructors with a viable method to increase student achievement of A- and B-Plan business letter-writing skills.
2. Small-group letter rewriting exercises can provide business communicators with a viable method to increase student achievement of A- and B-Plan business letter-writing skills.
3. Methods other than the lecture-discussion method should be used to increase student achievement of business letter-writing skills.

Recommendations

Although this study indicated that rewriting exercises (both individual and small-group) can increase student achievement of business letter-writing skills on positive (A-Plan) and negative (B-Plan) letters, more research is needed relating to these skills. In view of the needed research, the following recommendations are made:

1. That a study be conducted to include the persuasive (C-Plan) letter.
2. That a study be conducted to include a larger sample and to include schools other than the University of New Orleans.
3. That a study be conducted using a dependent variable other than student achievement of business letter-writing skills. It is possible that letter rewriting exercises might affect other types of written communication or that small-group exercises might affect oral business communication skills.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Request for Use of
Copyrighted Material



University of New Orleans

Lakefront • New Orleans • Louisiana 70122 • (504) 286-6210

DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

May 1, 1981

Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
1818 Ridge Road
Homewood, IL 60430

Gentlemen:

May I have your permission to use the information on the two enclosed checklists in my doctoral dissertation study?

Although the wording is not identical to that in your text, Communication Through Letters and Reports, I used the checklist idea and adapted points from the book for my use. These lists will be used as an evaluation instrument for student performance of business letter-writing skills on positive and negative message letters.

Because I want to field test these checklists during the 1981 summer session at the University of New Orleans, where I am an instructor, I will appreciate your response before June 1, 1981.

Sincerely,

Beverly A. House

Enclosures: 2

APPENDIX B

Letter Granting Permission for
Use of Copyrighted Material

RICHARD D. IRWIN . INC.

1818 RIDGE ROAD • HOMERWOOD, ILLINOIS • 60430

CHICAGO TELEPHONE: (312) 468-9100

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE: (312) 798-6000

May 15, 1981

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Ms. Beverly A. House
Department of Office Administration
University of New Orleans
Lake Front
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122

Dear Ms. House:

You may have our permission to use material in the manner and for the purpose specified in your letter of May 1, 1981 from the following books(s):

COMMUNICATING THROUGH LETTERS AND REPORTS
by Clark and Wilkinson

Amount of material: X as cited in your letter only

Limitations: maximum number of copies to be duplicated
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This permission does not extend to any copyrighted material from other sources which may be incorporated in the books in question. If the material is to be used in a book, please send a complimentary copy to our permissions department upon publication.

Sincerely,

P.S. If this dissertation is ever published for general distribution, further permission will be required.

Barbara Joyce

(Mrs.) Barbara Joyce
Permissions Editor

BJ:mb

APPENDIX C

Validating Panel

VALIDATING PANEL

Dr. Marcia A. Anderson, Chairperson
Business Education Program
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901

Dr. Randy E. Cone, Chairman
Department of Business Communication
and Office Systems
University of New Orleans
New Orleans, LA 70148

Dr. Amanda Copeland
Department of Business Education
and Information Systems
Arkansas State University
State University, AR 72467

Dr. Wilmer O. Maedke, Chairman
Department of Office Administration
and Business Education
California State University--Los Angeles
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032

Dr. William L. Wohlgamuth
Department of Administrative Services
and Business Education
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, PA 15701

APPENDIX D

Letter of Request to the Validating Panel



university of new orleans⁶³

lake front new orleans louisiana 70122 (504)288-3161

DEPARTMENT OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

May 1, 1981

Dear

Your contributions to the field of business communication are well-known and respected among educators. Because of this, I would like your help in validating the enclosed checklists.

I am beginning preparation for my doctoral research, at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, that will involve rewriting letters in an attempt to improve student business letter-writing skills. These checklists are designed to be used for evaluating student performance of business letter-writing skills in writing positive and negative business letters.

After you review these two sheets, will you please complete and return the enclosed form to me. Since I plan to field test the checklists during the 1981 summer session at the University of New Orleans, I will appreciate your response before June 1, 1981.

Sincerely,

Beverly A. House

Enclosures: A-Plan Checklist
B-Plan Checklist
Reply Form
Addressed Envelope

APPENDIX E

Evaluation Form for the Validation of the Checklists

VALIDATION RESPONSE

In your opinion, will the points covered on the checklists be a valid measure for evaluating student performance of business letter-writing skills?

_____yes _____no

COMMENTS:

Date

Signature

APPENDIX F

Checklist Used for Evaluating A-Plan Letters

PLEASE NOTE:

Copyrighted materials in this document have not been filmed at the request of the author. They are available for consultation, however, in the author's university library.

These consist of pages:

67-68, 70-71, 73, 75,

77, 80, 84, 86 and 89.

University
Microfilms
International

300 N. ZEEB RD., ANN ARBOR, MI 48106 (313) 761-4700

APPENDIX G

Checklist Used for Evaluating B-Plan Letters

APPENDIX H

Pretest A-Plan Letter Assignment

APPENDIX I

A-Plan Letter Rewriting Exercises

LETTER TO BE REWRITTEN FOR A-PLAN
EXERCISE NUMBER ONE

Date

Executive Development, Inc.
4821 Flemmingsburg Rd.
Lexington, KY 40775

Dear Sir,

I am training director for Mammoth Industries, Inc., and today I received your brochure that advertised your in-plant training program in report writing. This sounds like the program we need, but I need some more information.

Is the course a general one, or can it be tailor-made to fit the needs of a specific company? Since we write mainly technical reports, will you gear the course to this form of report writing? Can we substitute the format we use (and are more familiar with) for the one you mention?

We have 27 engineers that need to take the course. Will there have to be two classes? Will there be two separate charges? Can the courses be offered in March or April?

I will appreciate your answer as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

John R. Mammoth, Jr.
Training Director

bh/JRM

LETTER TO BE REWRITTEN FOR A-PLAN
EXERCISE NUMBER TWO

Date

Harvy Mitchum
Box 1774
Millville, IL 60291

Dear Harvy:

I am writing to ask you about the cafe table and chairs you advertised for sale in the Daily News. I have 18 old booths and tables in my cafe that I'm thinking about replacing. The new ones are too expensive for me to consider. So, I'm looking for some used furniture.

Will you sell 18 of the 40 units? Can I get a discount? Will you deliver? What color are the units? What is the name brand? What is the model?

If you answer these questions correctly, I will drive to Millville to inspect the tables and chairs. I need this information by next week.

Thank you,

Martha Matlock

APPENDIX J

Posttest A-Plan Letter Assignment

APPENDIX K

Pretest B-Plan Letter Assignment

PRETEST B-PLAN LETTER ASSIGNMENT

You are vice-president for ABC Corporation, 1125 N. Caraway Rd., Memphis, TN 38101, and your corporation has been asked to donate \$1,000 to the National Youth Executive Training Clubs of America.

ABC doesn't contribute to any youth organizations. They do sponsor a \$1,000 scholarship at the local university each year for the most "promising" junior business administration major.

Your company receives numerous requests for money and cannot possibly donate money to everyone who asks for donations.

Write Ms. Joan McMurray, 4864 St. Bernard Ave., Memphis, TN 38105, and tell her that she will not get money from your company.

APPENDIX L

B-Plan Letter Rewriting Exercises

LETTER TO BE REWRITTEN FOR B-PLAN
EXERCISE NUMBER ONE

Date

Paul Liverman
Salt Lake City High School
10 Exchange Place
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

Dear Mr. Liverman,

Thank you for your subscription to Wall Street. We can't, however, send you reprints of "Inflation in the 1980's."

Surely you realize that the expenses we would incur by furnishing additional reprints is not feasible for us. Have you ever thought of photocopying them yourself? That would probably not be too expensive for you.

We appreciate your order, and if we can help you in any other way, feel free to call on us.

Sincerely,

Ralph M. Snoot
President

RMS/bh

LETTER TO BE REWRITTEN FOR B-PLAN
EXERCISE NUMBER TWO

Date

Ms. Helen Ayres
1215 Buchanan Avenue
Hollywood, FL 32207

Dear Ms. Ayres:

You are not entitled to a refund or a replacement for the bathing suit you bought over two years ago at Feline's Department Store in Miami.

If you had looked at the tag more closely, you would have noticed that the suit was only guaranteed for one season against defects in material and workmanship. Your suit looks like its seams are ripping because there has been too much of a strain on them. Perhaps you bought the wrong size.

Also, you were to address your complaints to the store and not to us.

We appreciate your business and hope you'll give Rose Mary swim suits and Feline's another try. By choosing the right size from our wide assortment of colors, styles, and sizes you can expect Feline's to honor the one-season guarantee.

Yours truly,

Robert Rickoff
Marketing Director

RR/bh

APPENDIX M

Posttest B-Plan Letter Assignment

VITA

Beverly Ann House, daughter of Ray and Lena House, was born on May 5, 1947, in Little Rock, Arkansas, and attended Jonesboro, Arkansas, public schools. She received her cosmetology license in 1964 and graduated from Jonesboro High School in 1965. After graduation, she attended Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and received a Bachelor of Science in Education degree in Business Education (1969).

Beverly began teaching in the Business Education Department of Central High School, West Helena, Arkansas, in 1969 and continued teaching in the same department for eight years. During the summers of 1969-77, she worked as a youth director, clerk, cashier, secretary, and hair stylist. In 1977, she accepted a Graduate Assistantship in the School of Technical Careers Secretarial and Office Specialties at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Beverly received her Master of Science in Education degree in Business Education in 1978 from Southern Illinois University.

In 1978, she accepted a position as an instructor in the Department of Office Administration at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, where she is presently employed.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: BEVERLY ANN HOUSE

Major Field: EDUCATION

Title of Thesis: AN EVALUTION OF TWO METHODS OF TEACHING BUSINESS LETTER-
WRITING SKILLS

Approved:

Barbara M. Stawitz
Major Professor and Chairman

William J. Rogers
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Sam Adams

James W. Adams

Earl Cheek

Charles W. Smith

Date of Examination:

March 22, 1982
